



# TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

## **Texas Juvenile Justice Department Response to the Independent Ombudsman Second Quarter Report, FY 2013 April 9, 2013**

The Texas Human Resources code, Section 261.060, provides that the Office of the Independent Ombudsman (OIO) shall accept comments from the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) for the OIO quarterly reports. The Code also provides that TJJD may not submit comments after the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the date of the report. TJJD received the First Quarter Report on April 2, 2013

The Second Quarter report identified OIO activities for December 1, 2012 through February 28, 2013 with the main focus on summarizing OIO activities. The report briefly summarized the following observations, noting:

- The Office of the Independent Ombudsman received 50 cases during this reporting period and of those, 20 cases were founded.

TJJD continues to appreciate the efforts of the OIO to ensure safety and security is maintained for TJJD youth and staff. We will continue to make systemic improvements that will enable youth to be successful in rehabilitation efforts.

### **Phoenix Update**

The Phoenix program has been in operation at the Mart Facility for nine months. There are currently fourteen (14) youth assigned to the program. To date, there have been no incidents of assault with bodily injury on staff in the Phoenix program. During this quarter there were four assaults on staff by youth in the Phoenix program, all of which occurred in January. There were zero in February. There were also four assaults on youth by other youth in the program, three in December, 1 in January and 1 in February. Youth who exhibit dangerous or substantially disruptive behavior within Phoenix are referred to security within the unit and are subject to level II hearings to provide appropriate consequences for their behavior. The Phoenix Multi-disciplinary team also evaluates the youth's progress or lack of progress to assign or remove appropriate privileges while making adjustments to the youth's individual case plan. Thirty-six youth have completed the Phoenix program since its inception. Of those thirty-six, twelve youth have earned their GED's, representing 34% of the population served.

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## **Additional Updates**

The Behavior Management and Treatment Task Force continue to work diligently to develop a proposal for executive staff to replace many components of the existing CoNEXTions rehabilitative strategy in order to enhance youth services, improve youth culture and create a meaningful treatment program which addresses individual youth needs while ensuring youth accountability and positive youth development.

In February, there were 26 workers' compensation claims filed, significantly lower than the 48 in January. Of the 26 claims in February, 21 were due to aggression and 5 due to industrial injuries. So far in FY 2013, the agency has averaged 38.3 claims per month, lower than the FY 2012 average of 49.7 per month. There has been a significant reduction in the average number of claims due to aggression. In FY 2013 there have been 27.5 per month compared to an average of 36.2 per month in FY 2012. This represents a 24% decrease.

Agency turnover has been reduced at all residential secure facilities and all but two halfway houses in the last quarter of FY 13.

The cost of overtime in residential facilities by month in September 2012 compared to February 2013 was reduced by a total of \$241,847.

We believe this can be attributed to a reduction in turnover in these locations, improvements in scheduling and improvement in employee morale.